

# Single Sort Recycling

*How does ecomaine do that?*



## What is single sort recycling?

Single sort (also called single stream) means that consumers need only separate recyclables from trash - sorting out just one group of materials. That means paper, glass, cardboard, metals, and different types of plastic are thrown together in just one container.



Without single sort, each type of recyclable material would need to be stored and delivered in its own container. That involves more thought in separation and more storage space in your house.



Because single sort is convenient, participation in recycling increases, and that's not just good for the environment...it has financial benefits for your community, too. Municipalities pay little or nothing to ecomaine for recycling disposal, but pay a much higher price per ton for trash disposal, therefore, the more you recycle, the less you pay.

## What happens to all those recyclables?

To be used in the manufacturing of new products, recycled materials do, in the end, need to be separated and baled by type. (e.g.: cardboard, aluminum, newspaper, etc.).

ecomaine is able to separate mixed recyclables into *ten* separate categories using special equipment with advanced technology... this equipment is what makes single sort collection possible.

Once all ten material types have been separated and baled, they have value and ecomaine sells them on the open market.

Like the stock market, recyclable market prices fluctuate based on demand for that material. Therefore, it is important to the success of recycling that you ask for and buy products made from post-consumer recyclables wherever you shop.



After being weighed at our scale house, trucks from all over southern Maine deliver mixed recyclables to ecomaine's "tipping floor." A front-end loader then puts the material onto a conveyor to begin the separation process.



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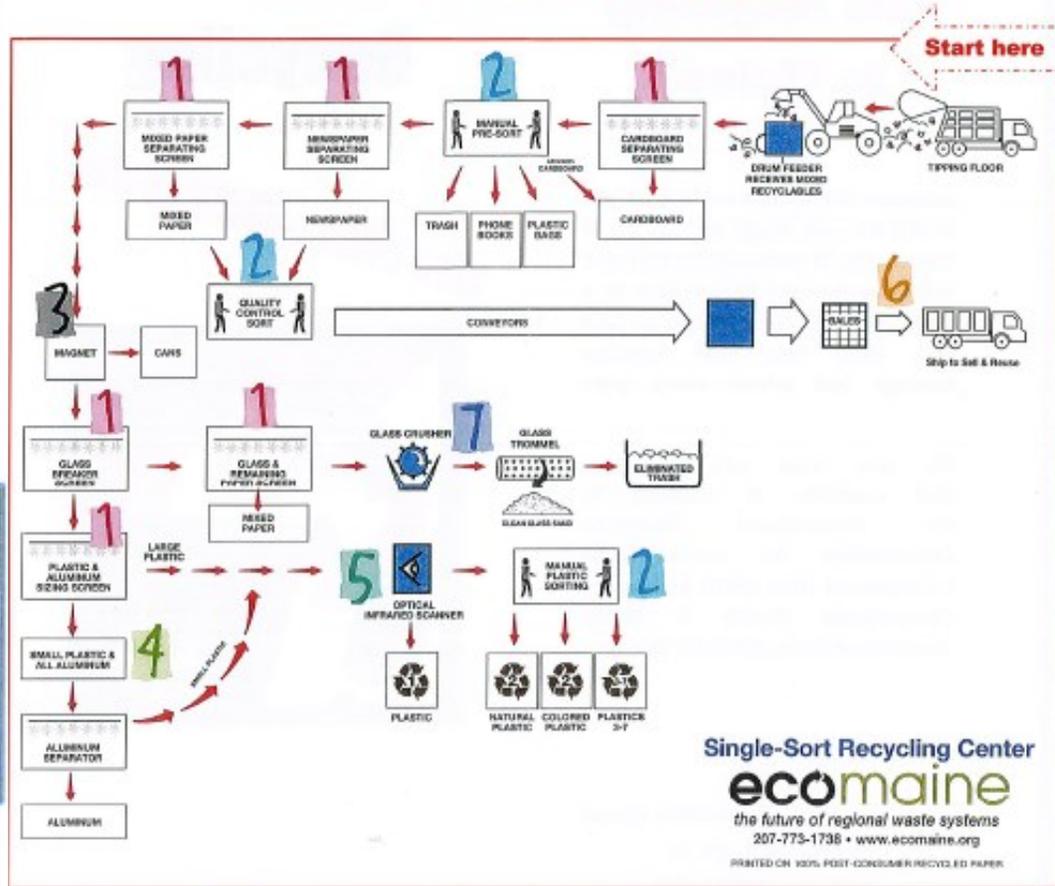
**Here's how it's done:**

Some materials are separated out using "screens" that consist of hard-rubber spinning stars arranged in rows. It is the size of stars and the distance between each one that determines which material will be separated out.



On the cardboard screen, for example, material on the conveyor is dropped onto stars that are very large and set far apart. Because pieces of cardboard are typically large, it rides over the top of the spinning stars, while all other materials fall between them. Then, the cardboard travels on to a storage bin and all the remaining materials go on to the next separating station.

## How does it work?



**It takes just *three minutes* for material to travel through the entire single sort system.**

**1** Screens (described at left) are used in several locations to separate out cardboard, various paper types and glass.

**2** At three different points in the process, manual sorting helps to catch materials that the automated equipment misses.



**3** Some materials are separated out using other methods; for example, magnets pick out the ferrous metals,

**4** Aluminum is caught with a separator called an eddy current, and

**5** #1 plastics are separated using an optical scanner.

**6** At the end of the process, each material is baled, sold, and picked-up by trucks, except...

**7** Glass cannot be baled, so it is ground into very small pieces and stored in piles.

Single-Sort Recycling Center  
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